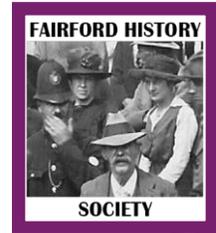


Fairford Flyer

No 74 May 2025



FHS Meetings 2025

All meetings are at 7.30 pm in the Farmor Room, Fairford Community Centre on the third Thursday of the month, (except for January, February and April 2025)

2025 Programme

- 15 May** 7.30 pm Along the River Coln in Fairford – Edwin Cuss (postponed from February)
19 June 7.30 pm AGM Show and Tell – members bring their own objects to talk about; the objects do not necessarily have to relate to Fairford.

Other Events

- 8 May** VE Day event at the Bull Hotel
10 May evening VE Day celebrations in the Cricket Field organised by the Royal British Legion with a barbecue and film (Dad's Army)
10 May Open Day at St Mary's Church
11 May 1-6 pm VE Day celebrations in the Cricket Field organised by the Royal British Legion (FHS display). Thanks to everyone who has contributed items for the display. Please come along and visit our marquee as well as all the other displays and activities.
22 May 2pm Cirencester Civic Society (CCS) is giving FHS a guided walk in Cirencester: if you would like to go on this walk please let us know either by email or at the next meeting. The walk will take 75-90 minutes. It is free (apart from parking) as we are giving the CCS a walk round Fairford in July
7-8 June Fairford Festival – Edwin Cuss and FHS Display in the Heritage Room, Community Centre 10-4

April's meeting: **The Map as Biography: from Fairford to Zululand by Peter Vujakovic**

Peter explained the title of his talk by showing a map centred on where he used to live in Kent. His home was in the centre, to the north was the farm where his father worked when he came to England from Serbia as a displaced person post-World War 2, which explains his name. The map also showed the local Downs where his parents and dog's ashes are scattered.

For the second part of his talk title, he showed a benchmark (the surveyor's levelling mark) on St Mary's Church. This was made around 1876 when the area was surveyed by the Ordnance Survey. The surveyors were military engineers and the engineer who worked at Fairford was later killed during the Zulu Wars (hence the talk's title).

The benchmark is situated on the southeast corner of the church, lowdown, and north of the Morgan tombs. The lichen shape is a good indicator of the spot. The height above sea level is marked on the map. It would be interesting to note the difference in 2025.

He also explained the different kind of maps that have been made over the years.

Most interesting were the LIDAR images which show the ground shape through the cover of trees which cannot be seen using ordinary aerial photography. This new technology is proving very useful to archaeologists as they can target areas to dig which they would otherwise not have been aware of the potential significance. In a field to the north of Fairford Peter showed the ridge and furrow which could not be seen on the ground. Other local features shown were a very clear image of Ranbury Ring which is densely covered in



trees and Trewsbury Hill Fort which can hardly be seen at all on the ground. This is very near the 'source of the Thames' (a matter of dispute for some who say it is at Seven Springs, and starts off as the River Churn.) Peter also showed images of the area above Sapperton Canal Tunnel which showed the air vents, and the spoil heaps made when digging the vents. The LIDAR images show the spoil heaps very clearly in a straight line above the tunnel from Coates to Sapperton.

These were just the highlights of the talk which gave much interesting information and we thank Peter for presenting the talk to FHS.

LADY HIRTZEL

It will be apparent from the council and newspaper items below that Lady Hirtzel was a very prominent and active Fairford resident. Apparently, her German-sounding surname gave rise to suspicion and distrust by some of the local population during the war but in fact she and her husband were as English as anyone else in Fairford. She was born in Ipswich on 27 December 1872 to Robert and Elizabeth Ransome and was a distant cousin of Arthur Ransome the well-known author of *Swallows and Amazons* and other books. During the war she was Chair of the War Invasion Committee, the Evacuation and Billeting Officer, and the Representative of the WVS that organised and ran The Settlement for the Evacuees. One of her daughters used to obtain the books freshly published for one of the evacuees in Fairford who was an avid reader.

On 9 April 1899 Olive married Frederic Arthur Hirtzel, a Civil Servant in the India Office based in London. He was knighted in 1911 and became the Permanent Under Secretary of State for India from 1924 until 1930 when he retired and moved from London to live in East End House in Fairford. The couple had four children, three daughters and one son, all born in London. Olive was widowed when Frederic died on New Year's Day 1937. A further tragedy occurred on 1 August 1944 when their eldest daughter Hildegard died of injuries sustained in a bicycle accident at Shaftesbury.

Frederic's family had indeed come from Germany. Frederic was born in Minehead, Somerset but his father, grandfather and great grandfather were all born and lived in Exeter. His great, great grandfather had arrived in Exeter from Heidelberg no later than 1756. So Olive's links to Germany were tenuous to say the least!

From Fairford Parish Council Minutes 1943-45

March 25 1943

A letter was read received from the Cirencester Rural District Council re a Victory Garden Show in aid of the Red Cross Agriculture Fund. It was proposed by Capt H R Chandler and seconded by Mr H Busby that the Clerk be instructed to write for the booklet giving full guidance on how to organise a V.G.S.

Monday September 13 1943

It was proposed and carried the clerk be instructed to write the British Legion and thank them very much for the help they gave the Council and the donation, which help such a lot to the wonderful success of the Agricultural Victory Show held in Morgan Hall Park on Saturday Aug 28th 1943 when a cheque for £136 was sent to the Fund.

Thursday March 23 1944

It was proposed and carried that the Clerk be instructed to write Mr Hughes re the dump on the Fairford & Lechlade road and ask if something could be done to prevent the Military from putting cardboard and paper on the dump causing so many fires etc.

Lady Hirtzel asked a question of removing the dump from the grass verge close to her wall as this was nothing to do with the Fairford Parish council; after a long discussion the Clerk was instructed to write to the Rural District Council and ask if this dump was not now required, as Lady Hirtzel had said, would they please remove it and post a notice to that effect.

April 19 1944

It was proposed and carried that Mr H Busby and Mr R W Bridges be appointed to represent this Council on the Rating Committee of the Rural District Council for a period of one year viz to the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council 1945. It was proposed by Mr H Busby and seconded by Mr R W Bridges and carried that the Clerk be instructed to write the

Swindon Gas Company and inquire if they were making preparations so that the street lamps could be lit as soon as peace was declared.

Friday September 15 1944

It was proposed and carried that the Clerk be instructed to write the Rural District Council re the awful condition of the dump in the Lechlade Road. Cardboard & wood boxes, goods and oranges etc were being deposited on this dump from other parts as well as from the Fairford Military Hospital and camps and this Council considers that something should be done at once in the matter.

Monday 20 November 1944

The Clerk read a letter he had received from Mr R N Hughes, Sanitary Inspector re a Public Convenience in Fairford. It was proposed and carried that the Clerk write Mr R N Hughes and state that this Council considers that this is not a time to build permanent public conveniences but it considers that the Military should be approached to put up something of the kind in this District.

There are two ladies' conveniences in Fairford in private ownership but there are no notices to that affect put up.

Monday 19 February 1945

Complaints were made re the American Forces' behaviour late in the evening, after dances etc. The Chairman was asked if he would kindly draft a letter suitable to send to the Officer Commanding.

December 10 1945

It was proposed that a public meeting be called in the middle of January to discuss the question of a war memorial.

NEWSPAPER CLIPPINGS

Gloucestershire Echo 9 May 1944

GOOD START TO "SOLDIER" WEEK AT FAIRFORD

Fairford, which is in the Cirencester and District area, has arranged an attractive daily programme of events for the Salute the Soldier week.

On Saturday there was an entertainment and baby show held in the Morgan Hall, and at night there was a dance.

Sunday was a big day. The proceedings began with a procession and church parade. The long procession was headed by the 54th Wilts Home Guard Band and the RAF and WAAF were well represented as were Red Cross nurses, Special Police, ARP, NFR and ATC with bugle band and, Girls' Training Corps, Women's Land Army, Boy Scouts and Girl Guides.

CHURCH CROWDED

The service in the church, which was crowded, was conducted by Rev C M R Luckman, of Castle Eaton.

Following the church service there was an opening of the meeting at the War Memorial, where addresses were given by Mr W R Morrison MP and Mr William Goodenough. After the meeting the procession reformed, and after a further parade there was a march past.

On Monday night a social was held in the Palmer Hall.

Gloucestershire Echo 4 July 1944

PEER'S WEDDING AT FAIRFORD

The marriage of Lord Howard of Penrith and Anne, widow of Mr Anthony Bazley, took place on Saturday at the Church of St Thomas of Canterbury, Fairford.

Father A V Littledale officiated, assisted by Father A de Zulueta (who gave an address), and Father John Lopes.

The bride, who was given away by Admiral Sir Alan Hotham (her uncle), wore a grey dress with white collar and a head-wreath of marguerites; Mr A Herbert, Polish Army, was the best man.

A reception was held by Mrs Frances Cadogan at Quenington Old Rectory.

Gloucestershire Echo 26 June 1945

FINE WORK AT FAIRFORD WVS SETTLEMENT

At the meeting of the Cirencester Rural Council on Monday it was reported that the WVS Settlement at Fairford was for all purposes connected with the Council closing down.

During its existence from September 1939 to May of this year, the Settlement had served 174,985 meals and 135,062 hot beverages.

The chairman (Mr G M Scrutton) said that the organisation mentioned was something quite unique, and at some future date an expression of gratitude would be made to Lady Hitzel and her helpers.

Gloucestershire Echo 8 August 1945

US HOSPITAL NCO'S DANCE

An enjoyable dance for non-commissioned officers of the 686th Unit of the 186th General Hospital was held at Palmer Hall, Fairford on Tuesday, when the guests included a number of American Red cross volunteers from Cheltenham.

The dance was organised by 1st Sgt T Haisty and Sgt J Miller, and the band of the 186th General Hospital played.

During the evening Col F J Combe, Officer Commanding 186th General Hospital was present and joined in the dancing.

The dance was the first held only for non-commissioned officers. The room was tastefully decorated, and lighted candles illuminated each table which were set round the dance floor in cabaret style.

Gloucestershire Echo 20 September 1945

THANKSGIVING WEEK

Fairford will open its week on Saturday afternoon with a fancy dress parade, free tea for children between the age of 3 and 16, and a dance in Palmer Hall at night.

The programme of events at Fairford for next week includes a whist drive on Monday, a concert on Tuesday, a sale of work and produce, and a concert on Wednesday, a dance on Thursday, entertainment on Friday, and a funfair and victory bonfire on Saturday.

Gloucestershire Echo 25 September 1945

WOMEN'S WAR EFFORT

The Chairman (Mr G M Scrutton) said that the Council wished to express its gratitude to all that helped in the war effort, particularly the women. It was not possible to mention them all by name.

The Chairman paid special tribute to the work of Lady Hirtzel and her helpers at the WVS Settlement; to Lady Cripps; to Mrs Macleay in relation to salvage; and to Colonel D Macleay for his organisation on National Savings in their area.

Although this next item is post war it is quite an amusing snippet to end this series of wartime related newspaper cuttings:

Gloucester Citizen 27 October 1945

Whilst two boys were playing 'conkers' near a mill pond at Fairford, one of them made a kick at the "target". The shoe became unloosed flew off the foot and landed in the pond.

The hue and cry raised by the boys brought some Polish soldiers to the scene. Unacquainted with the English language but with the impression that there was a boy's body attached to the floating shoe the Polish soldiers dived into the pond.

A policeman arrived as the mystified Poles returned to shore with a single shoe. Acting as interpreter he explained that the hullabaloo caused by this arose from the fear of the boys of a ticking off on reaching home, seeing that under rationing system, shoes were not easily replaced in those days.